

## Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 283912

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NATO CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL FROM WASHINGTON

SUBJECT: POLITICAL ANALYSIS: THAW IN ROMANIAN-SOVIET  
RELATIONS

1. IN MOVES CARRIED OUT WITH TYPICAL ABRUPTNESS,  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 283912

PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU IN RECENT MONTHS MADE SOME SIGNIFICANT  
CONCILIATORY GESTURES TO MOSCOW. THESE GESTURES FOLLOWED

THE APPARENT SMOOTHING OUT OF SOME KEY DIFFERENCES--BY

MUTUAL CONCESSIONS--INVOLVING BILATERAL RELATIONS, AS WELL AS OF CONTENTIOUS ISSUES THAT HAD BEEN PLAGUING PREPARATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONFERENCE (ECPC).

2. AVAILABLE EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT CEAUSESCU'S DECISION TO TAKE SOME OF THE STRAIN OUT OF ROMANIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS WAS PROMPTED IN THE FIRST INSTANCE BY CONCERN THAT TENSIONS PROVOKED BY RENEWED POLEMICS OVER BESSARABIA MIGHT GET OUT OF HAND. OTHER DIPLOMATIC CONSIDERATIONS AND ECONOMIC FACTORS ALSO APPEAR TO HAVE FACILITATED A LIMITED ROMANIAN-SOVIET RAPPROCHEMENT. CONTINUATION OF THE THAW WILL DEPEND ON SOVIET TOLERANCE OF ROMANIA'S FURTHER ASSERTION OF ITS INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY LINE, AS WELL AS ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SOVIETS ARE WILLING TO MEET SOME OF ROMANIA'S MORE PRESSING ECONOMIC NEEDS.

3. SOVIET VISITS MARK A TURNING POINT: INDICATIONS OF A DEFINITE WARMING TREND IN ROMANIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS BEGAN TO ACCUMULATE FOLLOWING THE LATE MAY BACK-TO-BACK VISITS TO BUCHAREST OF THE SOVIET ARMY'S POLITICAL DEPARTMENT CHIEF, GEN. A. A. YEPISHEV, AND CPSU SECRETARY KONSTANTIN KATUSHEV. THESE VISITS APPEAR TO HAVE HAD THE DUAL OBJECTIVE OF LESSENING TENSIONS IN BILATERAL RELATIONS AND REMOVING THE LAST OBSTACLES TO THE CONVENING OF THE ECPC. ROMANIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS HAD DETERIORATED MARKEDLY IN THE SPRING FOLLOWING RENEWED POLEMICS OVER BESSARABIA, CULMINATING IN A WAVE OF PANIC BUYING IN BUCHAREST. FEARS HAD BEEN AROUSED BY AN UNANNOUNCED ROMANIAN MILITARY EXERCISE ACCOMPANIED BY RESERVE CALL-UPS THAT TRIGGERED RUMORS OF CLASHES BETWEEN SOVIET AND ROMANIAN UNITS AT THE BORDER.

4. EVIDENCE THAT THE DUAL OBJECTIVE HAD BEEN LARGELY MET WAS NOT LONG IN COMING:

(A)--SHORTLY AFTER THE VISITS, THE ROMANIANS CALLED FOR THE PROMPT CONVENING OF THE ECPC AND USED THEIR INFLUENCE  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03     STATE 283912

WITH THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY TO GAIN THAT PARTY'S ACQUIESCENCE.

(B)--ON JUNE 2, CEAUSESCU ANNOUNCED IN A SPEECH IN BUCHAREST THAT ROMANIA HAD NO TERRITORIAL DISPUTES WITH THE USSR OR OTHER NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES (AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO THE BESSARABIAN ISSUE).

CONFIDENTIAL

(C)--IN THE SAME SPEECH, HE REAFFIRMED THAT ROMANIA WOULD CONTINUE TO COLLABORATE MILITARILY WITH ITS WARSAW PACT ALLIES EVEN IF THE PACT ITSELF WERE DISSOLVED.

5. CEAUSESCU-BREZHNEV MEETING: THE EXTENT OF THE RAP-PROCHEMENT, HOWEVER, DID NOT BECOME APPARENT UNTIL CEAUSESCU'S WIDELY PUBLICIZED AUGUST 2-12 VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION. TWO ASPECTS OF THE VISIT WERE PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY. FIRST, BY MAKING THE FIRST VISIT TO THE SOVIET REPUBLIC OF MOLDAVIA BY A TOP ROMANIAN LEADER SINCE WORLD WAR II, CEAUSESCU DRAMATIZED HIS DECISION TO DEFUSE THE BESSARABIAN ISSUE. SECOND, THE STATEMENT ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF CEAUSESCU'S AUGUST 3 MEETING WITH BREZHNEV IN THE CRIMEA CONTAINED SEVERAL FORMULATIONS THAT SUGGESTED TO MOST OBSERVERS A ROMANIAN INTENTION TO ASSUAGE THE SOVIETS:

(A)--A REFERENCE TO "EVER CLOSER UNITY OF VIEWS" OF THE TWO LEADERS;

(B)--STRONG EMPHASIS ON IMPROVING PARTY-TO-PARTY RELATIONS;

(C)--USE OF THE TERM "PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM"; ALTHOUGH THE ROMANIANS TRADITIONALLY DEFINE THE TERM DIFFERENTLY, ITS USE IN A BILATERAL DOCUMENT, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE ROMANIANS HAD OBJECTED TO IT DURING THE ECPC NEGOTIATIONS, WAS WIDELY SEEN AS A CONCESSION.

6. SOVIETS RECIPROCATATE: SINCE MAY, THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER, LESS PUBLICIZED, INDICATIONS OF BETTER ROMANIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS:  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04     STATE 283912

(A)--SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO ACCOMMODATE ROMANIA BY AGREE-ING TO SELL IT SEVERAL HUNDRED T-55 TANK ENGINES;

(B)--THE GRANTING OF SOVIET LICENSES TO PRODUCE YAK-52 AIRCRAFT AND THE BTR-70 ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER; AND

(C)--REPORTED SOVIET AGREEMENT "IN PRINCIPLE" TO PROVIDE AN UNSPECIFIED QUANTITY OF CRUDE OIL TO ROMANIA. SOME REPORTS SUGGEST THAT THE SOVIETS HAD UNSUCCESSFULLY TRIED TO TIE THE PROVISION OF OIL TO A DEMAND FOR ROMANIAN OILFIELD WORKERS. INCREASING ROMANIAN IMPORTS OF CRUDE OIL FROM THE MIDDLE EAST HAVE AGGRAVATED ROMANIA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE SITUATION.

THE IMPROVEMENT IN SOVIET-ROMANIAN RELATIONS ALSO APPEARS

TO HAVE PAVED THE WAY FOR CLOSER ROMANIAN TIES WITH OTHER WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES. POLISH PARTY CHIEF GIEREK IN OCTOBER PAID HIS FIRST VISIT TO ROMANIA SINCE ASSUMING POWER IN 1971, AND THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF HIS VISIT NOTED AN "IDENTITY OF VIEWS ON ALL FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS"--A FORMULATION THAT THE ROMANIANS PREVIOUSLY

HAD RESERVED FOR THE YUGOSLAVS. THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AFTER THE RECENT EXCHANGE OF VISITS BETWEEN CEAUSESCU AND BULGARIAN PARTY LEADER ZHIVKOV ALSO SUGGESTED THAT DIFFERENCES HAD BEEN NARROWED.

7. CEAUSESCU'S MOTIVES: HARD EVIDENCE ON WHICH TO BASE AN ASSESSMENT OF CEAUSESCU'S MOTIVES IS LACKING. MANY OBSERVERS ARE STRESSING ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS, IN PARTICULAR THE APPARENT SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO GIVE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION TO ROMANIAN REQUESTS FOR CRUDE OIL. ON THE OTHER HAND, AUTHORITATIVE ROMANIAN SOURCES HAVE DOWNPLAYED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ECONOMIC FACTORS AS AN ELEMENT IN THE IMPROVED RELATIONS. WHILE THEIR STATEMENTS CANNOT BE TAKEN WHOLLY AT FACE VALUE, IT IS FAR FROM CLEAR THAT ROMANIA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND ENERGY PROBLEMS, SIGNIFICANT AS THEY ARE, ARE SERIOUS ENOUGH IN THEMSELVES TO PROVOKE A MAJOR DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05     STATE 283912

VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIETS. IT THEREFORE SEEMS LIKELY THAT ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS ALSO PLAYED A ROLE:

(A)--SOVIET INSISTENCE ON A QUID PRO QUO FOR MOSCOW'S COMPROMISE AT THE ECPC;

(B)--CEAUSESCU'S CONCERN THAT TENSIONS OVER BESSARABIA WERE PROVING OVERLY DISRUPTIVE, BOTH DOMESTICALLY (WITNESS THE PANIC BUYING IN BUCHAREST IN EARLY MAY) AND IN FOREIGN POLICY;

(C)--ROMANIAN DESIRE FOR A BREZHNEV VISIT; NO SOVIET PARTY LEADER HAS VISITED ROMANIA SINCE 1961, AN ANOMALY THAT CEAUSESCU, FOR BOTH DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY REASONS, REPORTEDLY WISHED TO ERASE (NOTE: IT HAS NOW BEEN OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED THAT BREZHNEV WILL IN FACT PAY AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO ROMANIA IN LATE NOVEMBER, IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO A WARSAW PACT POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN BUCHAREST);

(D)--POSSIBLE ROMANIAN BELIEF THAT BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA WERE PREOCCUPIED WITH DOMESTIC MATTERS AND SUBJECT TO UNPREDICTABLE LEADERSHIP CHANGES AND THAT IT

WAS THUS OPPORTUNE TO SHORE UP RELATIONS WITH THE USSR.

8. BROAD LINES OF ROMANIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNCHANGED: CEAUSESCU OBVIOUSLY WAS AWARE OF AND SENSITIVE TO THE SPECULATION THAT HIS WIDELY PUBLICIZED VISIT TO THE USSR PROVOKED, BOTH WITHIN ROMANIA AND IN FOREIGN PRESS AND GOVERNMENT CIRCLES. IN SEPTEMBER HE MOVED FORCEFULLY TO REAFFIRM ROMANIA'S CHARACTERISTICALLY INDEPENDENT FOREIGN

POLICY STANCE. HIS LONG-POSTPONED VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA TOOK PLACE THE SECOND WEEK IN SEPTEMBER AND WAS NOTABLE FOR THE HEAVY AND POSITIVE MEDIA PLAY IN BOTH COUNTRIES. IN THE JOINT DECLARATION ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE VISIT THE TWO LEADERS:

(A)--DEVOTED AMPLE SPACE TO CHARACTERISTICALLY ROMANIAN FORMULATIONS ON NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND NON-INTERFERENCE;  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 06 STATE 283912

(B)--EXPRESSED ANXIETY OVER "THE CONTINUING USE OF THE POLICY OF POSITIONS OF STRENGTH AND ATTEMPTS TO LEGALIZE THAT POLICY"; AND

(C)--NOTED THAT THE ECPC HAD AFFIRMED "THE RIGHT OF EACH PARTY TO FREELY CHOOSE ITS PATH OF STRUGGLE."

WHILE BOTH TASS AND THE NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY REPORTED EXCERPTS FROM THE STATEMENT, THE SOVIET ACCOUNT WAS CONSIDERABLY SHORTER.

9. CEAUSESCU'S VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA COINCIDED WITH THE DEATH OF MAO, AN EVENT THAT OCCASIONED A STRONG REAFFIRMATION OF ROMANIA'S INDEPENDENT LINE IN THE SENSITIVE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE. IN CONTRAST TO SOVIET AND OTHER WARSAW PACT MEDIA, WHICH BARELY REPORTED MAO'S PASSING, ROMANIAN MEDIA GAVE THE EVENT MAXIMUM COVERAGE. CEAUSESCU'S MESSAGE TO THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP PRAISED MAO FULSOMELY, AND THE DAY OF HIS FUNERAL WAS DECLARED A DAY OF NATIONAL MOURNING IN ROMANIA. ROMANIAN COMMENTARIES NOTED THAT ROMANIAN-CHINESE RELATIONS WERE BASED ON "PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM," REINFORCING ROMANIA'S CONTENTION THAT ITS USAGE OF THE TERM DIFFERS FUNDAMENTALLY FROM THE USSR'S.

10. FOLLOWING MAO'S DEATH, CEAUSESCU RECEIVED A CHINESE MILITARY DELEGATION, AND THE TWO COUNTRIES EXCHANGED "FRIENDSHIP DELEGATIONS."

CONFIDENTIAL

„ PROSPECTS: WITH THE BREZHNEV VISIT AND THE WARSAW PACT POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN BUCHAREST PENDING, IT IS LIKELY THAT BOTH THE SOVIETS AND THE ROMANIANS WILL CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THEIR RELATIONS OVER THE NEAR TERM. AT THE SAME TIME, CEAUSESCU IS UNLIKELY TO BREAK OFF INITIATIVES TOWARD CHINA, THE WEST, AND THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THAT RUN COUNTER TO SOVIET WISHES. THUS, FROM BOTH BUCHAREST'S AND MOSCOW'S STANDPOINT, CONTINUATION OF THE CURRENT IMPROVEMENT IN ROMANIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS DEPENDS ON  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 07     STATE 283912

SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF ITS LIMITED CHARACTER. CEAUSESCU  
WILL PROBABLY ALSO SEEK TO USE THE THAW TO EXTRACT FROM  
THE USSR WHATEVER HE CAN TO MEET SOME OF ROMANIA'S MORE  
PRESSING ECONOMIC NEEDS. THE WILLINGNESS OF BOTH PARTIES  
TO HONOR THE EXPLICIT OR IMPLICIT COMMITMENTS RESULTING  
FROM THE MAY AND AUGUST MEETINGS APPEARS CRUCIAL TO THE  
FUTURE COURSE OF ROMANIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS. KISSINGER

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